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NURSERY RHYMES
FOR THE GROWN-UPS

AND SOME OF
ANOTHER KIND

NURSERY RHYMES FOR THE GROWN-UPS

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ANOTHER KIND

By

EDNA PERRY BOOTH

Author of "The Shadow-Man and Other Poems"



THE GRAFTON PRESS

NEW YORK

MCMX

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1910

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TO THE ONE
OF ALL THE WORLD WHOM
I LOVE BEST
I DEDICATE THIS BOOK
WITH LONGING

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NURSERY RHYMES
FOR GROWN-UPS

"What have you done," Saint Peter asked,
 "To hope for entrance here?"
I stood without the jewelled gate
 And smiled, for heaven was near.
"What have you done?" Then shook his head,
 And in his pocket dropped the key;
"You cannot enter, you who once
 Bored the whole world with poetry."

NURSERY RHYMES FOR GROWN-UPS.

Hey-diddle-diddle, the man in a riddle
Jumped after a heart of stone,
The little girl laughed to see the sport,
But found she had broken her own.

Love, Love, the naughty man,
Stole my heart and away he ran,
He ran so fast, he tripped and fell,
And he dropped my heart and it broke,—oh, well!

Old Dan Cupid was a mighty old stupid,
And a mighty old stupid was he,
For he called for a maid and a bench in the shade,
And forgot the man, did he.

Pretty Patty picked a peck of red assorted hearts,
And some were chipped and some were scratched, and
some were all in parts.
But one she found all whole and sound, and bigger than
the rest,
And this she took up tenderly and hid within her breast.

Rattlebrain, rattlebrain, foolish man,
Play with girls' hearts as oft as you can,
Take them, and break them, and fill them with pain,
And then do the same thing over again.

Naughty, naughty little lie,
Struck a girl and made her cry,
When the man went out to play,
Do you wonder that she ran away?

There was a man from Lonesometown,
And he was aught but wise,
He jumped into a love affair,
For two big laughing eyes;
But when he found the eyes were gone,
With all his might and main
He tried, but found he never could
Jump out of love again.

The heart of a woman lay on the wall,
The heart of a woman had a great fall,
And all the love of a thousand men,
Couldn't mend that woman's heart again.

Faith and Love went up the hill,
To fill a heart with laughter,
Faith fell down and broke his crown,
And Love came tumbling after.

Little Miss Smart has lost her heart,
And doesn't know where to find it,
Leave her alone and she'll come home
With the man she left to mind it.

One, two, I love you,
Three, four, more and more;
Five, six, the hour fix;
Seven, eight, don't be late;
Nine, ten, fooled again!

Man's love is hot, man's love is cold,
Man's love is always not easy to hold,
Some like it hot, none likes it cold,
But most like it on the spot when it is told.

If a body meet a body,
Anywhere will do,
So that one of them is I,
And the other you.
If a body kiss a body,
Who need ask the reason why,
So that one of them is you.
And the other, I?

“Where are you going, pretty Miss Prue?”
“To look for a man who will always be true.”
“You will soon hurry back with your pretty lips curled,
For you never will find one in all the world.”

Merrily ride, with Love at your side,
To make a fair lady your dear little bride,
A ring on her finger, a rose in her hair;
If you'd make her happy, oh man, have a care.

Little Red Rose go take my part,
A kiss on her lips, a thorn in her heart,
Little Red Rose go climb above her,
And tell her I love her, and love her, and love her.

Sprinkle, sprinkle, little car,
How I wonder where you are,
For the loves of summer rise,
And blow dust into my eyes.

Little Miss Harden went to the garden
Of her heart, to get love a rose,
But when she got there, the garden was bare,
Now why was it, do you suppose?

The queen's in her chamber, weeping and sad,
The king's in the parlor swearing like mad,
Love in a corner sorrowful stands,
Holding a poor broken heart in his hands.

Love, Love can eat no fat,
(I'm waiting for the question),
Since Faith and Love have had a spat,
Dear Love has indigestion.

“Will you walk into my heart, dear?”
Said the lover to his queen,
“‘Tis the truest, bravest heart, dear,
That you have ever seen.
The road into my heart, dear,
Is up a way that’s fair,
And I have many lovely things
To show you, when you’re there.”

“There’s a corner piled with memories,
And roses wet with dew,
And lilies pale and lovely,
And violets sweet and blue;
And promises and kisses,
And everything that’s true,
And years of love and loyalty,
That I have kept for you.”

“Yes, I’ll walk into your heart, dear,
If you can prove to me,
That there survive such ancient things
As love and loyalty.
I believe there still are corners,
Where flowers and kisses grow,
But love and loyalty,—they died
A hundred years ago.”

Peter, Peter, when you meet her,
Do be careful how you treat her,
If you love her long and well,
She won’t mind the pumpkin-shell.

“Little kiss, little kiss, what do you here?”
“I’m waiting to light on your lips, my dear.”
“Little kiss, little kiss, better be gone,
There are too many other lips you’ve rested on.”

Hickory, hickory, dickory dock,
“It’s getting late,” says the old hall clock,
“It’s getting late,” says the clock in the hall,
“And now I know he won’t come at all.”

“Mistress Mary, do be wary,
Don’t give your heart to the earliest comer,
The first sweet violet lives not long,
And never a rose outlasts a summer.

Old Maid, draw the shade,
Sit by the fire and spin,
Take a cup and fill it up
With dreams of might-have-been.

Who told a wicked little lie,
And made his dear love nearly cry,
So when he’d gone she longed to die?
He did.

Who wrote, “I’m sorry as can be,
Sweetheart, won’t you come back to me,
I miss you, miss you dreadfully?”
She did.

Who came one lovely summer day,
And kissed her foolish tears away,
And told her he had come to stay?
He didn’t.

A Fool met Love coming over the hill,
Said the Fool, "You can give me a kiss, if you will;"
"And what," said Love, "Will the Fool give me?"
"Only my heart, here it is," said he.

Then Love laughed softly and Love laughed long,
As he tossed the heart that way and this,
While the Fool stood by and hummed a song,
And waited for the promised kiss.

Love played with the heart as he had planned,
But in the game too reckless grew,
For the heart slipped out of his careless hand,
And suddenly broke in two.

"Oh, dear," said Love, "How very cruel,
I didn't mean to throw and miss.
Your heart is broken, I fear, poor Fool,
But here, I'll give you the kiss."

"Great oaks from little acorns grow,"
Fate threw an acorn straight at me,
It struck, but that of course you know,
Since I am writing poetry.

"A friend in need, is a friend indeed,"
You've heard it, so have I,
But the friend to know is the friend "with dough,"
Let the needy ones go by.

Sing a song of someone,
Blue eyes full of tears,
Four and twenty heart-aches,
Crowded in the years.
When the tears were over,
The heart-aches still were there,
What a foolish thing to think
That anybody'd care.

One little prayer of all the rest,
I'd ask of Heaven above,
God grant the man who loves me best,
May be the man I love.

Love fails, hearts break,
The world goes on just the same,
But to the one who remembers,
Is it hardly worth the game!

"Over the teacups," so they say,
The best friends met in the olden day;
But now, the friends who are most sincere,
Meet over the glasses. Who's buying the beer?

And when I am not here some day,
And some day when this book is old,
Give just one thought to me, and say
"She loved me."

And I laugh, "Ha-ha,"
And I laugh, "Ho-ho,"
At the love of man.
For don't I know!

Should old acquaintance be forgot
And never brought to mind?
Not if he owes you a ten-spot,
And leaves his purse behind.

Over the hill to the poor-house,
Slowly and sad I went,
Thinking of money I'd given away,
But more of the coin I'd lent.

Three cheers for the red, white and blue,
Red for her lips so wise,
White for her silvery hair,
Blue for her tender eyes,
My mother.

IN MY DREAM-BOOK

In my dream-book, love, I found
A little tress of hair,
And Lord only knows how long
The thing's been lying there.

Was it yellow, brown or red,
When I clipped it from your head?
But I found it yesterday,
And I threw the thing away.

In my dream-book love, I found
A little faded rose,
Why I kept the foolish flower
Heaven only knows.

How the old thing made me sneeze
When I threw it to the breeze.
Faded bud and little curl,
You belonged once to which girl?

A Fool there was and he used to care
(And I never knew just why)
For a wonderful woman all eyes and hair,
All soft smooth ways and silken snare,
And I still do wonder that he could care,
(For I think the woman was I.)
Oh the heart she broke, and the pain she woke,
With cruelly careless hand.
But here is something he did not know,
She broke her own, and he never will know,
And would not understand.

WHERE THE SOFT LIGHTS FALL

Where the soft lights from the candles fall,
Breaking the sulky gloom,
Half in the shadow on the wall,
Her picture fills my room.
Shoulders half bare and soft white breast
Hiding beneath the veil
That floats fluttering back and falls to rest,
On her hair all brown and pale.
Who is it? I really never knew,
And surely do not care,
For the picture advertised cigars
Before I stuck it there.

QUATRAIN

The sunset-bell rings soft its pealing sweetness,
An early star creeps out into the sky,
And in his arms at last I find completeness,
Till something whispers, "Child, it is a lie."

SOME OF ANOTHER KIND

SOME OF ANOTHER KIND

I'M TIRED OF PEOPLE

I'm tired of people, I want just you,
And the whispering grass and the noisy trees,
And the long bent road that wandered through
Those miles of summer mysteries.
How I remember the old stone-wall,
Where we loved to stop and rest awhile,
And the crusty oak that grew so tall,
And held the sign that read, "One mile."

One day as we sat there, a wounded bird,
Fell at our feet and fluttered and died,
With the saddest cry I ever heard,
And I held it close, and cried.
You kissed the tears and said, "There, there,
It is only a bird with a broken wing,"
You couldn't imagine why I should care
So much, for the poor dead thing.

We've gone since then, oh, mile on mile,
You and I down a separate way,
I'm tired of people, and once in a while,
Wish I were back to that summer-day,
With its noisy trees and grasses sweet,
And long bent road, and poor dead thing,
That fluttered down to die at our feet
With a pitiful broken wing.

CONTENTMENT

You and the dreamy solitude of years,
You and a little cabin in the wood,
Where the small windows open to the blue,
And show the sky in every changeful mood.

You and your kisses on my mouth,
You and the warm touch of your hand,
When through the trees the day has gone,
And night has fallen on the land.

Long hours of tenderness and love,
Long days of happiness come true,
Long years of trust and loyalty,
And you, my dear one, always you.

BERT

The world was empty, my days were so long,
I was tired to death of the game,
When out of the heart of a truant song,
Into my life you came.
Something from your sweet music drew,
And took my memoried soul to you.
I knew that my face you did not see,
That 'twould have been the same, and yet,
The song you sang was all for me,
And when 'twas done, my eyes were wet.
The words—, I cannot remember them all,
Something of love, they are always the same,
But the music was sweet as a mother's call,
Gathering love as it came.
The world's not so empty, the days not so long,
Since the night that I listened with tears to your song,
And something has softened the memories that hurt,
Since your music came into my dreaming, Bert.

ROSES

Don't send me roses, they break my heart,
I cannot bear their sweet perfume,
For the love of my whole life died one day,
With the roses that filled my room.
Frail as their velvet petals, false as their scented breath,
Cruel as the thorns that stung me, was the love, that
brought me death.
Only send roses when life is by,
For love means roses and roses die.

September 7, 1908.

A WOMAN'S DREAM

I felt the soft arms cling about my neck,
The little head drop low against my breast,
I saw the blue eyes close in sweet content,
As baby lay at rest.
I heard the beating of a little heart
So close against my own they seemed as one;
And then I raised my head and prayed, "Oh, God!"
My arms were empty, I was still alone.

THE BOY THAT'S GONE

A little jacket, threadbare, old,
Out at the elbows and pockets that sag
From the marbles that lay in a jumbled heap
In an old tobacco-bag.
A pair of boots half full of holes,
That have tramped through miles of mud and wet,
They stand in a corner by the stove,
I have not parted with them yet.

Reminders of a boy that's gone,
Who filled my life with joy and pain,
For whom I'd give up half the world
To have back once again.
He staid here such a little while,
I wonder why he came at all,
To creep into my lonely heart,
And wear the jacket small.

I wouldn't mind the muddy boots,
Nor stop the noisy whistled tunes,
I'd tolerate the butterflies,
The old birds'-nests and dry cocoons,
And even if the baseball now,
Came through the window on my track,
I think I'd smile with mother-love,
And try to throw it back.

Oh, little coat that held him close,
And kept him warm through rain and snows,
I hide my face within your folds,—
And wonder if he knows.

CAMILLA

There are a few I love;
Fewer, I know, who love me as you do,
So very few, indeed, I would that there were more.
But you, Camilla, you, of the golden heart,
You, who can understand when I am sad,
You say no word but slip your hand in mine,
And wait until the silent mood is gone.
There are a few I love. Some for their kindliness,
Some for a mutual ken of sorrow's song,
Some for their love for me, and to these last,
Camilla, you, of the golden heart, belong.

I LOVED HER TOO

Just let me lay these violets in her hand,
I loved her too;
Perhaps at last she'd smile and understand,
If she but knew.

Just let me drop a kiss upon her brow,
I loved her so,
And I can dare to kiss her now,
Since she won't know.

Just leave me here awhile with her alone,
I loved her too,
My tears perhaps would half atone,
If she but knew.

TOUJOURS

Always! Ha-ha, oh well,
You thought it was always, then,
And I? I know how long it is,
This always of you men.

About as long as our smiles will reach,
Or your promises endure,
As long as our slender arms can go,
Is this always, you call toujours.

Always! Ha-ha, oh well,
You will always be the same,
Always promising love toujours,
And always playing the game.

EVENING

Heigho, the day is ended, the sky's gold turns to blue,
And in my dreams of beauty are woven dreams of you.
Across the sky there falters the soft cry of a bird,
As once from out the distance your calling voice I heard.

Out of its golden cradle the twilight lifts the moon,
And lays it where the evening wind its lullabies will
croon.

Within the moon, the windsongs, the night-sky's misty-
blue,
The mystery of heaven, I hear and see just you.

I AM AFRAID TO SAY GOOD-BYE

I am afraid to say good-bye,
Yet the present hour of pain,
Is naught to what the future years will be
Without you; the years when you and I
Are parted by an empty sea
Where our wrecked ships will never sail again.
The hours, the dreary ages I must spend
Without you in the shadows all alone,
They make my very soul cry out to you, my friend.
The parting is so cruel, yet I could bear it,
It is the thought of all the lonely years to come,
The long long life of mine with you not here to share it,
That in this bitter hour strikes lips with sorrow dumb.

MY LOVE

Who that has looked upon her can forget
The old-gold glory of her lustrous hair,
The cool deep-shadowed pools that are her eyes,
The soft red lips that shame the smiles they wear.

Who that has known her fingers' slow caress,
Could e'er be satisfied to feel again
The touch of other hand: she broke my heart and yet,
Not to have known her would be far greater pain.

AT WORK

Great God, is this my destiny,
To drudge here in the dust from day to day,
To only dream the sunshine and the laughter,
And make believe I hear the music play?
Is this the world to which some dread fate called me,
From out an ignorance of bliss supreme,
Must I go ever on with life about me,
And only find the soul of it in dream?

March, 1910.

IT WAS NOT ENOUGH

It was not enough that you loved me,
You should have told me so,
You should have been quick to prove it,
Else how was I to know.

You should have held me closer,
With kisses on lips and hair,
Caught me up in love's wild whirl-wind,
And made my heart want to care.

You should have been strong and daring,
But oh, dear heaven above,
Women will not be caring,
When men must be taught to love.

THROUGH THE WOOD

Frail little flower of blue,
How cruel for spring to call thee into life,
From out thy flower-world, into
A world of mould and withered leaves,
And all brown things that once, like thee, were new.

Frail little flower, in lighter mood,
The sights, the sounds that make the shadows rife,
The gloom, the sadness of the naked wood,
Might bring a smile where now the spirit grieves.

. . .

Soft-flowing river, crystal stream,
Soul of the trees and rushes on thy brink,
Where oft the idle poets loved to dream,
And from thy pleasant fountains stooped to drink,
Pure, patient stream, I would that I like thee,
Were so content to slowly move along,
Singing the simple tunes beloved of me,
Finding the old ways sweet, still new the song.

. . .

Great stalwart trees, deep-scarred and strangely old,
Would I were strong and bravely bold as thee,
To shield the friends, alas, long time outgrown,
Long since out-reached toward greater mystery.
Great gloomy trees, mysterious and old,
I would I knew the workings of each heart,
What ancient legends could thy leaves unfold;
What wondrous secrets to the world impart.

Outleading path to fields of last year's grain,
Past careless heaps of shriveled leaf and stalk,
How can one know what ghosts of joy and pain,
Down through thine aisles of desolation walk.
Old-trodden path, down which I musing go,
Dreaming the dreams of those who strayed before,
Leaving behind the things they learned to know,
Going ahead to all they loving, saw.

TO O—.

I wonder if you'd mind
If I should write your name upon this page,
If I should dress you up as truant love,
And put you all alone upon my stage.
While in the back-ground of a sylvan scene,
Where it must ever always rest apart,
Quite out of sight and all alone,
Nailed to a cross, my heart.

I wonder if you'd care if I should go
The length of this one page your name to write!
Yet, where's the use, since I will always know
That 'twas of you I thought and wrote tonight.

YEARS HENCE

Years hence when we are old and grey,
And sad December has succeeded May,
Will we dream the sweet dreaming of that other day,
When we are old and grey?

Years hence when we are far apart,
Will the same longing in each lonely heart
Cause us quick pain and make the tear-drops start,
When we are far apart?

Years hence when gold-winged memory,
Brings us a vision across Time's fickle sea,
Will we mourn sadly for the could-not-be,
Aye dear, despairingly?

Years hence when death lays both heads low,
Will we clasp hands across the long-ago,
And wonder sadly that it pained us so?
Sweetheart, we may not know.

TO AN OLD SWEETHEART

Our souls are wedded, dear,
You could not part them even if you would,
The hours we were together that one year
Have linked us closer than long ages could.
Heart answered heart, we needed not full speech,
With hand clasped close in hand, we understood;
And though you went far-off, beyond my reach,
Our souls are wedded, dear.

And you are wedded, dear;
I saw her kneeling when I went to pray,
The bright sun falling through a window near,
Kissed her soft hair in such a pretty way.
My prayers forgot, I watched the ungloved hand,
Where gleamed your wedding-ring, so new and gay,
And then I prayed for help to understand;
For you are wedded, dear.

LINES

My simple faith! I knew 'twould pass some day,
But prayed me oft 'twould not be oversoon,
My trusting love! That too has burned away,
As die the purple roses after June.
What, call them back? I could alas, as soon
Entice the throbbing stars to earth for me,
Ask warmth of yonder virgin moon,
Or claim eternal silence from the sea.

GENEVIEVE

Come with me, little girl, in joy or sorrow,
Far down the crooked road to yesterday,
Where lies the broken heart of our tomorrow,
'Twere better had we gone another way.
The sign-post that we passed long-since together,
Looms like a tired cross against the sky,
As we look backward now, I wonder whether
You read its message wrongly or did I.

SHE IS SO FAIR

A pale sweet moonbeam left the sky
To touch her cheek.
To touch her cheek and kiss her hair,
It left its heaven to nestle there,
She is so fair.

I would a pale moonbeam were I,
Then might I dare
To touch her cheek and kiss her hair,
My heaven would be to nestle there,
She is so fair.

A RHAPSODY

Direct me to some heaven-reaching hill,
Where I may rest and deeply drink my fill
Of God's pure ozone, on a lofty height
Where grander hopes are born and puny cares take
flight;
Where all the petty thoughts of life appear
So small within God's glorious atmosphere.
Where clouds bend low to touch their lips to mine,
Where winds infuse my blood with nature's wine,
Where earth grows small and heaven draws more nigh,
Where nothing is that is, and none lives, yet am I.
Above the atom man, upon the sod,
Among primeval things and nearer God.

THE STARS

The queen of night has broken
Her necklace up on high,
And thrown with reckless fingers
The jewels across the sky.
They glitter, and gleam, and glisten
In beautiful disarray,
Till dawn, the thief, creeps skyward
And steals them all away.

LARI

Your odd name falters from unwilling pen,
And almost, but not quite, I start up to erase
Its letters from my page, but hesitate, and then
I realize that nothing you can think of me can quite
efface
The memory of the sweetest music in the world; and when
Dear Faust is long retired to oblivion,
The soul you woke in each sweet strain, will still live on.

OH, LOVE OF MINE

Oh, love of mine, you are so far away,
Sometimes it seems I cannot e'en recall
Your features, as I saw them on that day
When we two said good-bye, and that was all.
I had so much to ask, so many things to say,
And yet when at the last, all else forgetting, I
Just looked at you, just looked and said good-bye.
Oh, love of mine, I spend the days,
In dreaming of your face,
The glory of your smile, your eyes, your hair,
The crowded heaven of your arms' embrace;
And then comes back the passionate despair
Of long, lone years, with you not here to share
The dreary bitterness of my repine;
Oh, love of mine.

LINES

I wonder where he is!
I'd like to know,
He gave me such fond kiss,
He loved me so.
And now his silence makes
The time so slow;
My heart strains till it breaks,
I love him so.

May 30, 1910.

NIGHT

And to me came the sweet scent of the hay,
The last breath of the grasses death had bowed,
And in the rose-blown west the thin moon lay,
A golden cradle for a tired cloud.

A sadness from the numberless bright tears
Some weeping angel dropped across the sky,
Fell on my soul and brushed the tired years,
As night, at last came by.

ON THE OLD SEA-WALL

Moonlight on far sweet waters, and rocks where the
bright waves crawl,
And you and I are together, at dusk, on the old sea-
wall.
You with your wild, sad beauty, and starry eyes whose
gaze,
Falters back to my face from the distant, impossible,
moonlit ways;
I with exultant heart-throbs, exquisite, lingering pain.
Adoring your face, nor caring to look on St. Augustine's
roses again.

"I love you, I love you, I love you!" the sea is repeating
it all,
Over and over, for ages it will whisper to you on the
wall.
You cannot go back through the twilight of roses and
fragrance from me,
My soul holds you fast with the fetters that were
forged in the dusk by the sea,
Moonlight on far sweet waters, and rocks where the
bright waves crawl,
To you, in your wild sad beauty, and me, on the old
sea-wall.
St. Augustine and the roses, the moonlight and the sea,
The wall where we sat in the dusking, are a thousand
years from me.

PEGGY

You will not care, I know,
If I call you Peggy in my little book,
I had to have some nickname Peg, and so,
Because I love you, that's the one I took.
It seems no matter where I am, I'll see
Always the red glint of your ruddy hair,
The bright glance you ever had for me,
And the sunny smile your sweet lips chose to wear.
When you or I, or both mayhap are gone
Far, far, along life's little crooked way,
I know that I shall oft look back and mourn
The pleasant things I found no time to say.

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

Break, break, break,
My heart if you dare, you fool,
For the sake of the tender day that is dead,
I pray you be not so cruel.
Ah well, for the wishes made
In the hush of my love's first day.
Ah well, for the pretty game
You taught me so well to play.
And my ships come riding home
From the waters of sunny Spain,
But I'd give all their treasures just once to hold
Your heart in my hand again.
Break, break, break,
My heart from each memory,
For the ship that sailed from its sunny port
Will never come back to me.

LINES

I do not weep that your love could have changed,
That other lips have sweeter grown to you,
That other face seems fairer than my own,
That brown eyes should at last succeed the blue.
You could not be a man and never change,
The several seasons make a perfect year;
I weep heart-broken knowing now that you
Could love another after me.

CHRISTINE

Christine, the daytime is over and into my silent room,
Steals the sweetness and sadness of evening and brings
you to me through its gloom.
You, with your eyes wide and tender, your lips with
their eloquent smile,
And I open my arms to your coming and give you my
heart for a while.
Do I hear you say, "Junie, I love you," or is that a
dream-fancy too,
I wonder indeed, that you love me, but I know all the
time that you do.
I haven't had much of life's loving, it's the other
folk's love I have seen,
But I almost believe in its glory, when you tell me you
love me, Christine.

GOOD-NIGHT

Good-night, dear love, good-night,
The moonbeams kiss the sea,
The billows kiss the shore,
And I, my love, kiss thee.
Good-night.

Good-night, dear love, good-night,
The moonbeams leave the sea,
The waves forget the shore,
When you, my love, kiss me.
Good-night.

DEAD LEAVES

The dead leaves scrape about the court,
With desolate resounding,
And pain-compelling tyrant thought,
Repeats the old soul-wounding.
The leaves, those skeletons of spring,
Will never live again,
Nor will my dreams be anything
But ghosts of old-time pain.

The thin moon hangs above the trees,
New-emptied of its splendor,
And on the tired evening breeze,
The leaf-song, low and tender,
Falls like the theme of twilight-rain;
The leaves, those skeletons of spring,
Will never live again,
Nor will my dreams be anything
But ghosts, of old-time pain.

NOTHING WILL MATTER A HUNDRED YEARS FROM NOW

Just take it from me, I have learned it,
It is foolish to squander the tears,
For the days that are here in the present,
Are making the hundred years.
It's a good old philosophy, try it,
The truth of it you will allow,
Nothing can possibly matter,
A hundred odd years from now.

The hours of now are but step-stones,
That lead to the days of tomorrow,
And today is so brief in its staying,
It is hardly worth half of its sorrow.
So put away all your old troubles,
And smooth the stale frowns from your brow,
For I tell you that nothing will matter,
A hundred odd years from now.

LINES

Back memory, back to your crowded vault,
Where sleep the joys of some lost May,
Among the violets and the rue,
We'll leave the dreams of yesterday.
We'll wipe the tears from your wretched face,
And drop a kiss where the hairs are gray,
Then lock the door of your hiding-place,
And throw the key away.

I KNEW THE BY-PATH

I knew the by-path that she went,
Her light low laughter lingered there;
A fallen blossom, and the scent
Of sweet bruised violets in the air.
Here, on the garden-seat, a glove,
There, in the grass, her parasol,
And where her feet had pressed, a love,
A little broken love so small.
I knew that she had come and gone,
Along the path, that summer's day,
By all the playthings she had worn,
And when she'd wearied, thrown away.

ILMA

Tonight I'd sing of you,
You of the sweet smiles and caressing ways,
The warm light in your southern eyes,
And all the tenderness your voice betrays.
There is so much to tell about the loveliness,
The wistful beauty of your changeful face,
I cannot crowd one feature's praising
Into the smallness of my page's space.
When you begin to speak there steals upon me,
All the enchanted days of sunny Spain.
When all my castles tumbled are and fallen,
I'll come to you to build them up again.

IN MEMORIAM

1

The twilight lived with you makes night
Seem darker now I am alone;
The single star that jewelled my ring of sky
Is lost, forever gone,
Strayed midst the myriads of later lights
I cannot find it more.
And so you passed; gone out
Into the crowds of souls that did not count.
Here, from my pedestal, that from the first
As 'twere my rightful place you bade me mount,
I search with burning eyes for you,
You, whom one heaven-strayed hour bore.

2

Out of the ranks of ordinary men,
You came, a stranger, whom I somehow knew,
Knew by the hand-clasp and warm smile,
Fed by a glowing inner flare;
The great clean soul of you reached out
Even to me, and strangely drew
Up to your mighty level, my lonely self,
My little self; and left it there.

3

And so I've staid: I'm satisfied to view
Uninterestedly the crowds that move;
From my great height I look benignly down,
And know full well they cannot ever climb
To where, one golden hour you once placed me
By the unshadowed side of silent love.
The hours go slow when one is all alone.
It is a long interminable time,
And yet, I would not change my solitary place
For proud and gloried seat upon a throne.

4

Back through the sometime emptying streets
 I know you will not to my side return,
 A sky that's lost its only darling star,
 May mourn it as it had not ever been.
 And yet there is a void, a pain-filled space,
 An empty, where there ever yet shall burn,
 Forever through the twilight and the night,
 And evermore, a fire fed always from within.
 No wonder when the greater passion gone,
 The lesser love but comes for us to spurn,
 We go not back to those first early lines,
 When life has brought us grander reds to learn.

5

Nor can I tear your memory from my heart,
 There is so much to hate, to just forget,
 But when I'd close its doors to all of you,
 My silly heart re-echoes, "No, not yet;"
 And then I fall; go back to where I stood,
 And try to build my prison's wall more wide,
 But when 'tis up, I turn exulting, sure,
 Only to find that you are still inside.

6

What shall I do with this great love of mine,
 The years have ceased to trouble it at all,
 It always is, the ages could not change it,
 'Tis here alway, I never have to call.
 I often wonder, how if you had loved me,
 What wondrous thing this love of mine had been,
 If starving it has given such proportions,
 For to have fed it—, God, the thought is sin.

Now you will read these lines, and reading wonder,
 Wonder with bated breath if it could be!
 I never told you, never let you learn it,
 And yet, and yet it is all true of me.
 Your life has led through stranger, different places,
 I've staid behind upon the temporal throne,
 You came not back to share the lonely glory,
 And so I've worn the worthless crown alone.
 Out of the crowd they've come, a score, to tempt me,
 With promises of gold, or place, or power,
 But here I stay, alone yet never lonely,
 For with me is my always golden hour.

Last night I watched the tender twilight-mother,
 Pulling a cloud-quilt o'er a tired star,
 And why I thought of you I cannot yet discover,
 Unless it is that you are far, so very far.
 I've tried to pull my soul's moth-eaten curtains,
 Around the time-old door you enter by,
 I think you must creep in by other entrance,
 For always, as to-night, I find you nigh.

Good-night, the stars hang low; without my window
 I hear the stirring of a sleepy bird,
 I think I'd smile if you were here to listen,
 But with you gone, oh, it is death I heard.
 The twilight lived with you, makes night
 Seem so much deeper than it would have been,
 I wish sometime 'twould open to your heaven,
 And let me, for one moment just look in.

April, 1910.

INEZ

1

Inez, I think of you so very often,
As of some strange sweet spirit that has strayed
Into my little world of patch-work heavens,
Where all my pretty dreams are quaintly laid.
You touch each one with gentle, timid fingers,
Stopping awhile among them unafraid;
Some are so like your own they might be stolen,
Out of a part of yours each one is made.

2

Many and deep your thoughts; you do not tell them,
Even to me you are so sometimes cold,
I cannot answer to the love within you,
I know not that it is, till it is told.
Go on among my dreams, sweet Inez, linger
The longer with the one that's all of you;
But gently, touch it not with careless finger,
Lest it die amid the sweetness that it grew.

3

My heart is always telling me, "Oh Edna,
Hold one dream sweeter, dearer than the rest,
In your little world of pretty patch-work heavens,
That you've laid out with a loving tenderness."
Inez, I think of you so very often,
I've learned to love you thinking of you so,
It may be that your heart one day will answer,
As down among my pretty dreams you go.

TO ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

Sometimes I read your passion poems with wonder,
And think you must have known me, heard my
name,
Been told the little story of my loving,
How to my heart a great loss one time came,
You must have known, or how else could you weave it,
Into the lines of yours that bring the tears;
Unless—and oh, I'd clasp your hand with understand-
ing,—
You, too, have known a sorrow with the years.

TWILIGHT-TIME

1

Dear, it is the twilight-hour,
Your old love-hour and mine,
There hangs a single weary flower
Upon the trailing vine.
Its fragrance falls into my room,
And almost I can feel,
Amid the essence of its bloom,
The sweetness of you steal.

2

Into my little life you came,
Like this erotic flower,
And, love of mine, I held you close
For one sweet twilight-hour.

Dear, at some other twilight-time,
 Some far-off fragrant gloom,
 Perhaps with the scent of a weary bud,
 You'll steal into my room.
 Steal in with the starshine at the dusk,
 As though you had not been away,
 Out of the sweetness of gathered musk,
 Into my twilight stray.

Out of my little life you went,
 To answer a soft heart-call,
 When the fragrance of love you had was spent,
 And I had gathered it all.

CROSSING THE RIVER

I was so sad and tired,
 I hardly thought I could outstand the day,
 I think my soul ached, or was it the remembering
 That you were gone and it was almost May.
 The spring and you went always hand together,
 Neither without the other could be found,
 And so this morning e'er I crossed the river,
 My tired heart was still to thee-ward bound.
 I was so sad and desperate-weary,
 Even of pleasures that had once beguiled,
 When lo, beneath me gleamed the river's ripples,
 And at the glimpse of water my soul smiled.

AFTER THE LOVING—LOVE

1

You were so cruel. Why do I go on loving?
You were so far. Why do I keep you near?
It is that you are always as I dreamed you,
That all-times keeps you here.

2

You staid an hour, then passed beyond my holding,
And yet you never stirred from out my heart;
I wonder if I ever had a planning,
That you were not of it the greater part.

3

You left me lone, selfish of all the radiance,
As when a gold star leaves its world above,
After your going, there was still the loving,
And after the loving—love.

WHEN I AM GONE

1

How desolate the world is!
Did I ever once suppose
That 'twas fair, that skies were splendid,
That all things were sweet and true.
Ah, but see, then I had you.

2

As I grieve for you this hour,
Someday those I leave behind,
Will weep for me, and mayhap murmur,
We miss her so; she was so kind.

3

You'll hear the old songs that I used to sing,
 You'll see the road where on-a-time in spring
 We walked together. The fields, the wood,
 The bridge where oft we silent stood
 And dreamed; then whispered low of dulcet days to be;
 You'll see them all, then turn and tread alone
 The homeward path, for I, I shall be gone.

YOU KISSED ME

1

You kissed me. Now I do not even care,
 If I never see your blessed face again,
 Do not mind if that first kiss must be our last,
 I can now endure the after years of pain.

2

You kissed me. For one glowing moment, I
 Looked into a lovely heaven on your face,
 Till the door was closed with me alone outside;
 It was worth it and I would not change my place.

3

You kissed me. Then you willingly forgot,
 While these lips of mine will never cease to burn.
 I can almost feel your lips against mine now.
 And see your face whichever way I turn.

4

You kissed me. And to you it meant just naught,
 While to me it was an answer to a prayer,
 You are kissing someone now just like as not,
 But you kissed me once, and so I do not care.

DREAMING

1

The sea is awake and calling,
 Calling to me; it seems
That there is nothing and no one,
 But you and me, and dreams.
To my feet the waves come crawling,
 Crawling over the sand,
Out of the sea they tumble,
 And hurry to where I stand.

2

And I dream that I am drifting,
 Drifting, drifting away,
On the soul of the dark blue waters,
 Into some far-off day.
Into some day of love-dreams,
 Love-dreams at last come true,
Where you are in love with someone,
 And I am in love with you.

3

You pillow your head on my bosom,
 As we drift to an open sea,
And away from the world you tell me
 That you are in love with me.
I warm my lips at your heart-flame,
 As I drift to the sea with you,
And dream that I have been dreaming,
 And wake up to find it true.

May 20, 1910.

WELL !

Well, what matters it after all,
As long as we have enough to eat,
Enough to keep
Us warm; a place to sleep,
What matters it? The rain may fall,
The sun shine out; our tired feet
Are leading the same way down the mall,
To the shadows in the hollows deep,
Where the shortened sunbeams never crawl.

THE ANGELS ARE LAUGHING

The angels are laughing. My loved one is gone,
I sit in the still of the evening alone,
And wonder with cruel mingled pain and regret,
What folly I fell to, what pride did forget,
What I said, did, or thought to hurt him and make
His soul draw away when he knew his mistake.

2

It was sweet while it lasted; it should not have been,
Though my loving was folly, his folly was sin,
And I knew all the time when his soul answered mine,
That never at all was my asking divine,
And I fought for a respite; I tore at my heart,
To reach love and longing and rend them apart.

3

It was almost undone, I was used to the pain,
I had wounded desire, when he came once again,
And his soul called me back from the unwelcome rest,
To live in his dear heart, then die on his breast.

May, 1910.

TO BILLIE

1

I had been drifting, drifting,
Down through the empty years,
Past reef and rock that I never saw,
For the mist of big soul-tears.
Perhaps I was tired or didn't care,
Perhaps I never tried to see,
But one day I found an anchorage,
For the restless barque of me.

2

You came to me with warm glad smile,
And words that didn't mean a thing,
You took my tired little heart,
And strangely made it sing.
You called me and lo, I answered,
You tell me 'twas meant to be,
And out of my world of soul-ache,
You tenderly lifted me.

3

Now it is nice to hear you,
To hold your hand and feel
My soul grow bigger and better,
With your thoughts that to me steal.
I cannot forget you, ever,
I really need you now
To help me, to make me stronger,
And loving me, show me how.

May, 1910.

LOVER'S LEAP

(The incident really occurred in Jamaica, that little island of insane love and romance. Lover's Leap is still in existence.)

1

It all comes back to me in the night;
The sky is the same soft blue,
With here and there a misty cloud
And the red moon drifting through.
It all comes back, the ruined fort
High up on the lichened bluff.
The great palm trees against the dark,
And the grass just tall enough
To cover our feet as we walked along,
Our white hands did not even touch,
For I was cold, quite cold and strong,
And she, she loved me much.

2

I had met her, oh, so long before,
On a wind-swept day of blue,
As I galloped madly through the palms
She came and galloped too.
Her booted foot with silver spur,
Her slim hands on the bridle-reins,
Her wide hat imprisoning the curls,
Woke something southern in my veins.
But that is all—we rode and rode,
Along the sea, a golden way,
And not a look or word of mine,
But was clean as God's first day:
I thought of course that she understood,
For she liked me well and told me so,
And I do not think she knew 'twas love,
Until it was time for me to go.

It was my last night. How the water swirled
 Around the rocks, a mile below;
 The swish of its cruel fingers struck
 The spray of rain-drops into snow.
 She heard the moaning of its cry,
 And drew to me across the space,
 Her cold hand caught mine to her lips,
 I felt her lovely glowing face.
 A wondrous pity filled me, for
 I could not love her, and my heart
 Went racing backward to the States,
 Where some one waited, lone, apart,
 In cold proud beauty, unafraid
 That I could for an hour forget
 The word scarce breathed between us two,
 With meeting lips and lashes wet.

And then my dreaming heart came back,
 Back to the great dark eyes that cried;
 I shuddered, fearful, sick at soul,
 And struck the clinging arms aside.

.

I think through all God's after years,
 I'll see the look of mortal pain,
 The wounded love that seared her face,
 And going left it cold again.
 She came so close I felt her breath,
 But strange she did not touch me now,
 Only a tremor caught her lip,
 And brought the moisture to her brow.

Her great eyes burned into my soul,
I scarcely heard her passioned sigh,
And then she whispered, white lips set,
“You’ll love me or I die!”
She bounded past me through the night,
Poised like a bird above the sea,
Her face turned toward the drifting moon,
And so, she went from me.

5

It all comes back, oh, many times,
Along the crooked years and slow,
I see again the small dark face
Of her, who dying, loved me so.
And I sometimes dream what life had been
With her, in that sun-kissed zone,
If I had chosen to take the joy
Of her great love for my own.

May 22, 1910.

GUS

1

I was afraid you might not know
Which of my poems I meant for you,
And so for fear you’d choose the one
That was the least complete and true,
I had to write the “Gus” quite plain,
So that you need not ask again.

2

I've known you half a dozen years,
 It might be half a hundred though,
 For friendships, Gus, like yours and mine
 Take longer than one thinks to grow.
 I know that ours could stand the strain
 Of every folly on the list,
 Perhaps you'll put it to the test
 Someday, if I insist.

3

Were books the introductory note?
 It seems to me they must have been,
 For what a literary world
 Since then we've journeyed in.
 You even tried to teach Chinese,
 Chop-suey, don't you know, we ate
 Because you said "It's easier far
 When one can demonstrate."
 And ho-so-guy like this,——good luck,
 Of course I never made it right,
 And then you laughed and said, "Ting-a,"
 Which means you know, "goodnight."

4

I've known you half a dozen years,
 You've always been the same good friend,
 I wish that these few words of mine,
 Could bear you all the love I send.
 It's six short years, a longsome time,
 To keep the heart of friendship true,
 Perhaps it would have changed long since,
 Had not the friend been you.

May, 1910.

THE ETERNAL QUESTION

1

Twice yesterday and not at all today;
I wish that I had never known the bliss,
Of your near presence all those other days,
When I must suffer this.

2

One cannot live on dear departed joys,
Nor can the heart subsist on what it had,
I'd give up scores of my old memories,
Only to now be glad.

3

I'm tired of asking why that should have been,
There never comes an answer to the cry,
Hearts go on aching through the years and years,
And no one knows just why.

4

Why couldn't this have happened that we want,
Why shouldn't we have known that little bliss,
It wouldn't change God's plans so very much,
If hungry lips could kiss.

5

The pity of it is that so much love,
Is being every hour thrown away.
Why cannot God deplete tomorrow's hoard,
And scatter some to-day!

May 29, 1910.

A HUSBAND'S SOLILOQUY

1

I was leaving her for the other girl,
The one who was not my wife,
The one who had come with her fierce wild ways,
Into my married life.
I was but to be gone an hour or so,
An hour or so of bliss,
Just to make sure that she still cared,
And leave on her lips my kiss.

2

But as I was going my wife came close,
And said, "Here's a rose to take,
And dear, if not for mine alone,
Be good for the children's sake."
"Why, where do you think I'm going?" I asked,
And drew her to where I stood.
"I do not know," then smiled a bit,
And said, "But just be good."

3

To just be good! I dropped her hand,
And stood quite still in the candle-light,
Then said, "Let's finish that book of yours,
I don't think I care to go tonight."

4

It's a lot of years, little wife, since then,
I wish I had understood,
But I want you to know that for your sake,
I have tried, in my way, to be good.
It isn't a devilish lot of fun,
And it's lonesome most of the days,
But I think I'm beginning to understand,
And I guess that goodness pays.

I CAME A WANDERER

1

I came a wanderer knocking on a stranger-door,
The closed door of your heart,
I feared to enter should it open, nor
Was willing to depart.

2

But when with gentle hand you drew the heavy bar,
And flung the great door wide,
I crept straight in, for I had travelled far,
And there was rest inside.

3

I've staid perhaps whiles longer than I should,
I cannot bear to go,
The light and warmth I love, you've been so good,
It all has pleased me so.

4

But when once more you draw the heavy bar,
To one you'll want to stay,
Just leave the door a little bit ajar,
And I shall slip away.

HEARTS AND FLOWERS

1

You gave me the flowers and took my heart,
While the lovely music played,
And I buried my face in the roses sweet,
Because I was afraid.
Afraid to look in your brimming eyes,
That were full of love for me,
So I buried my face while the music played,
It was 'Hearts and Flowers' you see.

You kissed a rose where my lips had been,
 And took the flower away,
 I think you put it inside your breast,
 Where the little red heart lay.
 And now I have neither heart nor flower,
 Since the night the music played,
 And I dared not look in your brimming eyes,
 Because I was afraid.

May, 1910.

MY FRIEND

1

I think I could tell you anything,
 You've taught me to trust you so,
 And it doesn't seem strange to unburden my heart,
 When it's always to you I go.
 You've a way of saying, "Oh, never mind,
 A bit of rain makes the flowers grow,
 And this little trouble you suffer now,
 Makes sweeter life's afterglow."

2

You have such a way of listening,
 With sweet sincerity,
 It makes no difference what I tell,
 Of my small history.
 You make me believe it is half your joy,
 To share its pains with me,
 And so, my friend, that's the reason why
 You *are* my friend you see.

May, 1910.

FORGIVE

1

I'm sorry. You do not know what for,
I hope, somehow, that you may never know,
Someone has said I have not long to stay,
So say that you forgive before I go.

2

You do not know what for. It matters not,
Sufficient that I've sinned against your love,
I cannot tell you, yet forgiveness ask,
For that small sinning that you know not of.

3

Yes, you'll forgive, with arms about me close,
For someone says I have not long to live,
It may be afterwards, yet I shall know
That you'll come, kiss me softly and forgive.

June, 1910.

MY PRAYER

Dear God, let death step lightly on my tired life,
Let fall his hand so softly on my head;
I want not soon that anyone will come
And know that I am dead.

Just for a time let me rest happily forgot,
Not one to star the dark of my new night,
I want my soul to go out far alone,
Then they may come who might.



IN THE CAMP

1

Oh, the stamp of the horses in the camp,
And the tramp of the cattle in the corral,
And the cow-boys lying round,
Hats and saddles on the ground,
Each one telling joke or story more immoral.

2

Oh, the smell of pine-needles since they fell,
And the spell of the moonlight everywhere,
And the still stars in the sky,
And a hushed wind blowing by,
And a score of happy cow-boys resting there.

3

Oh, the fall of Bill's tenor over all,
And the call of a home-voice through the dark,
And a half-turned cow-boy head,
And a quick sob smothered dead,
And a lot of deep-down thinking while we hark.

4

Oh, the deep pure healthiness of our sleep,
And the creep of the silence through the damp,
And the big moon in the sky,
Keeping such a friendly eye,
On the score of sleeping cow-boys in the camp.

June 5, 1910.

FORGET ME?

Forget me? You cannot,
The nights are too new,
The stars are too big still,
The sky is too blue.

The love that we lavished too recent for you
To forget me. You cannot although you will try,
Though your heart oft will ache and your lashes be wet,
Though someday the big tears will happily dry;
For I loved not so well and *I* cannot forget.

June, 1910.

TO HIS WIFE

Take him back. I do not want him.
Since I know
That he's thine and not mine
He may go.

Take him back. I do not need him.
And I've found
Something more than before
Love was crowned.

Take him back. You would miss him,
He's your all,
While I've ten or more men
At my call.

Take him back, yes, and keep him,
If you can,
For though you think he's true,
He's a man.

June 8, 1910.

DON'T BE TOO SURE

It ain't the man that's got the fare,
That always gets the train,
And when you go out fixed for it,
It doesn't always rain.
And sometimes when you're dressed for sun,
It rains a reg'lar sun-of-a-gun.

Don't be too sure you've copped a place
Among those feathered things
That play on harps the live-long day
And never use their wings.
It ain't the man that went to church
That always goes to heaven,
Nor him that wore a deacon's hat,
To whom a crown is given.

I'll take my chance with old Saint Pete,
And when I'm safe inside,
I'll own up to the foolish things
I did before I died.

I'm better for the badness, now,
I'm stronger for the sin,
And I wouldn't back up to that past,
Not now, for anything.
It's right-down easy to be good
When one's inclined that way,
And right-down hard to stay at home,
When one would go astray.
And when God's checking off the books
Upon the judgment day,
I think he'll recollect all that
And hand me out some pay.

TO EKIM

I would not call my little book complete,
Had it not but a stanza penned to you,
It need not of a fact be long and sweet,
So be that it is absolutely true.
Yet there is nothing true of you to tell,
That is not sweet as well.

Perhaps your unspoiled poet's soul,
Drew me to you before I knew its worth,
And since into its heaven I have stole,
It's hard to drop back to my little earth.
Yet if I drop, I will not go alone,
I think that I would find you always near,
To pull me up to this that I have known,
And with soft words of comfort keep me here.

JUNE 19, 1910.

My birthday and the same dear sky of blue
I'm looking to;
The same bright sun of June as long ago
I used to know;
Is laying long and tender fingers on my hair.
And piling gold amid the silver that is there,
And trailing kisses warm and sweet
From the roses at my feet.
It is June, the trees are green,
The sky is blue, all love is true,
And I'm only just—sixteen.

FRAGMENT

And out of my lovely sky of dreams,
Fate one time swept the golden star of hope,
And now among the clouds that stole its gleams,
My seeking hands all-time despairing grope.

June 26, 1910.

TO THEE

On this last page I'd write of thee today,
As to my heart's last beat thy love will fall,
As with my life's last breath thy name I'll call,
Because, ah love, because I loved thee best of all.
In all the world I wonder where thou art.
What weal or woe has ever been with thee,
So long as thou art blest and glad of heart,
I cannot care what Fate may bring to me.
I'd write to thee, for thee, alone today,
Of thee and thy great love and tenderness,
Thy faithful heart and all that I loved best,
And when 'tis done, I'll throw the pen away.

FEB 28 1911

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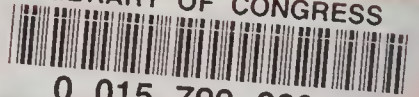
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